IN THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the present application:

1. (Previously presented) A method comprising:

establishing a speech-based dialog between a person and a machine during a call, wherein the person uses a communication device to speak to the machine via a communication channel during the call;

automatically detecting a characteristic during the dialog in real time, wherein the characteristic is a characteristic of the person, the communication device, the communication channel, or an environment in which the person is located during the dialog, but the characteristic does not uniquely identify the person, the communication device, or any user account; and

selecting a destination to which the call should be routed, based on the detected characteristic, and not based on the meaning of any speech or the failure to recognize any speech during the dialog.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the characteristic is an approximate age of the person.

4. (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the characteristic is the gender of the person.

5. (Original) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the characteristic is a type of speech being spoken by the person.

6. (Original) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the characteristic is an emotional state of the person.

7. (Original) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the characteristic is indicative of the truthfulness of speech of the person.

8. (Original) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the characteristic is an acoustic characteristic.

9. (Original) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the characteristic is indicative of a speech level of the dialog.

10. (Original) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the characteristic is indicative of a noise level.

11. (Original) A method as recited in claim 10, wherein the characteristic is indicative of an acoustic noise level of the dialog.

12. (Original) A method as recited in claim 10, wherein the characteristic is indicative of a signal noise level of the dialog.

13-14. (Canceled)

15. (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the characteristic is a noise level of an acoustic environment in which the person is located.

16. (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 15, wherein the characteristic is a noise type of an acoustic environment in which the person is located.

17. (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 15, wherein the characteristic is the level of reverberance of an acoustic environment in which the person is located.

18. (Original) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the characteristic is descriptive of a reason the person is experiencing an error.

19. (Original) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the characteristic is a type of communication device the person is using to communicate with the machine.

20-28. (Canceled)

29. (Previously presented) A system comprising:

a front end to generate a set of features in response to speech from a person during a dialog with the person, wherein the person uses a communication device during a call communicate with the system via a communication channel;

a set of models;

a speech recognition engine to recognize the speech from the person based on the features and the models;

a characteristic detector to detect a characteristic of the person, the communication device, the communication channel, or an environment in which the person is located during the dialog, wherein the characteristic does not uniquely identify the person, the communication device, or any user account; and

a call routing unit to select a destination to which the call from the person should be routed, based on the detected characteristic, and not based on the meaning of any speech or the failure to recognize any speech during the dialog.

30-60. (Canceled)

61. (Previously presented) A method comprising:

establishing a speech-based dialog between a person and a machine, wherein the person uses a communication device to communicate with the machine via a communication channel during the dialog;

automatically detecting a characteristic during the dialog in real time, wherein the characteristic is a characteristic of the person, the communication device, the communication channel, or an environment in which the person is located during the dialog, and wherein the characteristic does not uniquely identify the person, the communication device, or any user account; and

dynamically customizing a call flow of the dialog for the person during the dialog, based on the detected characteristic, and not based on the meaning of any speech or the failure to recognize any speech during the dialog.

62. (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 61, wherein the characteristic is a characteristic of the person's speech during the dialog.

63. (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 61, wherein the characteristic is the person's gender or approximate age.

64. (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 61, wherein the characteristic is the person's emotional state.

65. (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 61, wherein the characteristic is an acoustic characteristic.

66. (Previously presented) A method as recited in claim 61, wherein the characteristic is a type of communication device the person is using to communicate with the machine.

67. (New) A system as recited in claim 29, wherein the characteristic is an approximate age of the person.

68. (New) A system as recited in claim 29, wherein the characteristic is the gender of the person.

69. (New) A system as recited in claim 29, wherein the characteristic is a type of speech being spoken by the person.

70. (New) A system as recited in claim 29, wherein the characteristic is an emotional state of the person.

71. (New) A system as recited in claim 29, wherein the characteristic is indicative of the truthfulness of speech of the person.

72. (New) A system as recited in claim 29, wherein the characteristic is an acoustic characteristic.

73. (New) A system as recited in claim 29, wherein the characteristic is indicative of a speech level of the dialog.

74. (New) A system as recited in claim 29, wherein the characteristic is indicative of a noise level.

75. (New) A system as recited in claim 74, wherein the characteristic is indicative of an acoustic noise level of the dialog.

76. (New) A system as recited in claim 74, wherein the characteristic is indicative of a signal noise level of the dialog.

77. (New) A system as recited in claim 29, wherein the characteristic is a noise level of an acoustic environment in which the person is located.

78. (New) A system as recited in claim 77, wherein the characteristic is a noise type of an acoustic environment in which the person is located.

79. (New) A system as recited in claim 77, wherein the characteristic is the level of reverberance of an acoustic environment in which the person is located.

80. (New) A system as recited in claim 29, wherein the characteristic is descriptive of a reason the person is experiencing an error.

81. (New) A system as recited in claim 1, wherein the characteristic is a type of communication device the person is using to communicate with the machine.